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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/722,408

11/28/2003

Subhashini Subramaniam

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LAW FIRM OF NAREN THAPPETA
C/O LANDON IP, INC.
1700 DIAGONAL ROAD, SUITE 450
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

EXAMINER

TARAE, CATHERINE MICHELLE

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3623

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/722,408	Applicant(s) SUBRAMANIAM, SUBHASHINI	
	Examiner C. Michelle Tarae	Art Unit 3623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 November 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-36 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-36 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. The following is a Non-Final Office Action in response to the communication received on November 28, 2003. Claims 1-36 are now pending in this application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1, 3-4, 8-11, 13-14, 18-21, 23-24, 28-31 and 33-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Chatterjee et al. (U.S. 5,774,661).

As per claim 1, Chatterjee et al. discloses a method of enabling a user to customize a work flow associated with an operation in a meta directory server, said operation requiring communication with at least two data sources, said method comprising:

providing a plurality of built-in tasks to implement said operation requiring communication with said two data sources, at least one of said plurality of built-in tasks containing an extension point (col. 5, lines 59-61; col. 6, lines 35-37; col. 7, lines 11-13 and 17-22; col. 13, lines 60-66; Default, or built-in, tasks or processes are available for creating workflows. Existing workflows may be modified to create new ones. Decision point objects, or extension points, provide branching from one workflow to another.);

receiving from said user data indicating a custom task associated with said extension point (col. 6, lines 9-26); and

executing said custom task when said extension point is reached during execution of said one of said plurality of built-in tasks (col. 7, line 62-col. 8, line 14; A decision points helps to execute conditional branching for a workflow.).

As per claim 3, Chatterjee et al. discloses wherein said custom task contains an another extension point, said method further comprises receiving from said user data indicating an another custom task to be executed when said another extension point is reached during execution of said custom task (col. 8, lines 50-67; Figures 3 and 5; A workflow can have more than one decision points for conditional branching.).

As per claim 4, Chatterjee et al. discloses further comprising:

determining a corresponding set of extension points available in each of said plurality of built-in tasks, displaying each of said set of extension points associated with a corresponding one of said plurality of built-in tasks, displaying said custom task and said another custom task and enabling said user to specify said custom task associated with said extension point, and said another custom task associated with said another extension point (col. 8, lines 15-41; Figures 3-4; A workflow builder display allows a user to customize a workflow by inserting decision points, where the decision points come from a set of predefined conditional statements.).

As per claim 8, Chatterjee et al. discloses wherein at least one of said two data sources comprises a relational database (item 318 in Figure 3).

As per claim 9, Chatterjee et al. discloses further comprising providing an utility to indicate that a specific one of said extension points is reached (col. 8, line 50-col. 9, line 13; Figure 5; Conditional statements provide a check for additional conditions, clauses or other objects.).

As per claim 10, Chatterjee et al. discloses further comprising providing an utility in each of said plurality of built-in tasks and said custom task, wherein said utility indicates extension points available in a corresponding task (col. 8, line 50-col. 9, line 13; Figure 5; Conditional statements provide a check for additional conditions, clauses or other objects.).

Claims 11, 13-14, 18-21, 23-24, 28-31 and 33-34 recite subject matter similar to that already rejected above. Therefore, claims 11, 13-14, 18-21, 23-24, 28-31 and 33-34 are rejected on the same basis as claims 1, 3-4, 8-10 above.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 2, 5-7, 12, 15-17, 22, 25-27, 32 and 35-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chatterjee et al. (U.S. 5,774,661).

As per claim 2, Chatterjee et al. does not expressly disclose wherein said plurality of built-in tasks are provided by a designer implementing said meta directory server, wherein said designer is different from said user. However, Examiner respectfully submits that the title of the user providing the tasks (i.e., designer versus non-designer) is considered non-functional descriptive data. Accordingly, these differences are only found in the non-functional descriptive material and are not functionally involved in the steps recited nor do they alter the recited structural elements. The recited method steps would be performed the same regardless of the specific data. Further, the structural elements remain the same regardless of the specific data. Thus, this descriptive material will not distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms of patentability, *see In re Gulack*, 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994); *MPEP*, 2106.

As per claims 5-7, Chatterjee et al. does not expressly disclose further comprising enabling said user to specify that said custom task is to be executed synchronously, wherein said custom task is executed in a synchronous manner; enabling said user to specify that said custom task is to be executed asynchronously, wherein said custom task is executed in a asynchronous manner; or wherein said operation comprises either a synchronization operation or a consolidation operation such that said plurality of built-in tasks implement either said synchronization operation or said consolidation operation. However, Examiner takes Official Notice that it is old and well known in the workflow management art to be able to indicate a task to be

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executed either synchronously or asynchronously. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Chatterjee et al. to enable a user to specify a task to be executed synchronously or asynchronously as doing so provides the user with more control over when and how the task is executed, thereby enhancing the workflow design features offered in the workflow builder of Chatterjee et al.

Claims 12, 15-17, 22, 25-27, 32 and 35-36 recite subject matter similar to that already rejected above. Therefore, claims 12, 15-17, 22, 25-27, 32 and 35-36 are rejected on the same basis as claims 2, 5-7 above.

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Mital et al. (U.S. 7,184,967) discusses a GUI for workflow scheduling;
- Flores et al. (U.S. 6,073,109) discusses a system for managing linked workflows;
- Okita et al. (U.S. 7,221,377) discusses displaying information in a workflow system;
- Goodridge et al. (U.S. 5,848,393) discusses what-if functions for workflows;
- Berg et al. (U.S. 5,999,911) discusses a system for managing workflow;
- Tokuda et al. (U.S. 6,401,073) discusses a system for managing workflow;
- Hayashi (U.S. 6,349,287) discusses a workflow support system; and

- Goodridge et al. (U.S. 5,799,297) discusses what-if functions for workflows.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to C. Michelle Tarae whose telephone number is 571-272-6727. The examiner can normally be reached Monday – Friday from 8:30am to 5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz, can be reached at 571-272-6729.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/C. Michelle Tarae/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3623

February 26, 2008